





# City of Loma Linda Official Report

Floyd Petersen, Mayor  
Karen Hansberger, Mayor pro tempore  
Robert Christman, Councilmember  
Stan Brauer, Councilmember  
Robert Ziprick, Councilmember

## COUNCIL AGENDA:

TO: City Council

VIA: Dennis R. Halloway, City Manager 

FROM: Deborah Woldruff, AICP, Community Development Director 

SUBJECT: Trails Development Committee – Recommendations on the Use of the South Hills

## RECOMMENDATION

The Trails Development Committee and Staff recommend the following actions:

- The development of a Trails Master Plan to establish a formal trails system in the South Hills area of Loma Linda. The Trails Master Plan should identify both the trail locations and specific permitted uses of the trails. The Trails Development Committee has undertaken the tasks of hearing of public comments and testimony over the past three meetings, and gathering of information relating to the uses of the trail system. The attached agenda summaries and letters of comments provide a summary of the information (see Attachment A, Agenda Summaries; and, Attachment B, Letters of Comments).
- Based upon the input from property owners and users of the trails (including motorcycles and/or other motorized vehicles, the Trails Development Committee is prepared to undertake further study and analysis of the information and arrive at specific recommendations regarding the use of the South Hills

Staff supports the recommendations of the Trails Development Committee and further recommends that the City Council prohibit the use of motorized, off-road recreational vehicles such as motorcycles, quads, and other types of motorized vehicles on City-owned property until such time as a Trails Master Plan can be prepared and adopted.

## BACKGROUND

On May 27, 2003, the City Council discussed potential uses of the South Hills. Councilman Ziprick placed the issue on the agenda for discussion because of a series of complaints that had been received about off-road vehicles causing noise, dust, and other disturbances. The City

Council referred the issue to the Trails Development Committee for study and recommendations concerning the following: trail identification (on City-owned property versus private property); identification of the types of uses allowed by City Code (hiking, equestrian, off-road bicycling, off-road motorcycling, etc.); purchase of right-of-way for trail connectivity; and, maintenance of trails facilities.

The Trails Development Committee studied the issue and received public comments from local residents, South Hills property owners, and pedestrian, bicycle, and motorized trail enthusiasts at their meetings on June 19, 2003, July 24, 2003, and August 28, 2003. They concluded their study of the issue and formulated their recommendations to the City Council at the meeting on August 28, 2003.

### **ANALYSIS**

Earlier this year, the City and Sheriff's Department received many complaints about the dust and noise from off-road vehicles using the South Hills. Many of the complaints were from persons who reside on properties that are located along the urban limit line where off-road vehicles take access into the hills. In brief, the complaints were that off-road vehicles (mostly dirt bikes and quads) were causing excessive noise and dust and related disturbances almost all day on a daily basis. Several of these residents have stated that they can no longer use their outdoor yard areas when dirt bike and quad riders are present.

During the Trails Development Committee meetings, additional complaints were received from pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle trail users relating to noise and dust caused by dirt bike and quad riders. They also complained about a lack trail etiquette that is exhibited by a majority of dirt bike and quad riders because they tend to be rude and inconsiderate of others on the trails. In certain instances, hikers and equestrians stated that they have been at risk when on the trails due to the reckless behavior of some dirt bike and quad riders. Copies of the Agenda Summaries from all three of the Trails Development Committee meetings are contained in Attachment A.

Several of the property owners of larger parcels in the South Hills area attended the meetings and participated in the discussions. Their concerns are that it is nearly impossible to keep dirt bike and quad riders off of their properties. Over the years, they have posted the properties only to have the signs removed and/or stolen. They have installed fencing only to have it cut, pushed over, destroyed, or removed at points of entry that coincide with trail routes. The constant assault on the hills frequently results soil erosion and slope failure problems particularly during wet years. The result is that they would prefer that no one enter onto their respective properties.

A group of dirt bike and quad riders attended the meetings and actively participated in the discussions. They stated that many riders are very safety conscious and considerate of other trail users, but there are some bad eggs that tend to give all riders a bad reputation. They are concerned that the trails that can be used by dirt bike and quad riders are fast disappearing. Southern California is a very popular area for off-road vehicle use and many people are enthusiasts of the sport. The responsible riders in this area are more than willing to work with the City of Loma Linda, hillside area residents, and South Hills property owners to devise a Trails Master Plan that identifies trails and appropriate uses of specific trails, and provides opportunities for all types of trail users. The consensus of this group is that the South Hills area

is a large enough area that trails opportunities should be available to all trail users. However, the various types of uses may need to segregate because they are not always mutually compatible. One gentleman actually conducted some online research on grant funding available for off road vehicle trails. He also contacted some of the existing motorized trail parks to get input on how they function and what protocols/rules users are required to follow.

The Committee considered all of the complaints and constructive comments and discussed the issue at length. They felt that the problem is very complex and potential solutions should be carefully considered. The Committee has always been interested in seeing the development of a formal trails system that provides linkages to the larger, regional trails system. They feel that the complaints and concerns are strong indicators that a Trails Master Plan is needed to identify trails and appropriate trail uses. It is clear that certain trail uses should be segregated for the public safety, welfare, and convenience. The remaining questions are whether or not there is adequate space in the South Hills for segregated trails and what areas are appropriate for motorized trails. The Committee feels strongly that the time has come for the development of a Trails Master Plan and the members are committed to working toward that goal. It should be noted that all of the property owners, residents, and trail users who attended the meetings have stated that they would be willing to participate with City staff and the Committee to develop a Trails Master Plan.

Staff is pleased with the outcome of the Trails Development Committee's efforts on this issue and supports the Committee's recommendations to the City Council. However, the public nuisance issue remains unresolved until such time that a master plan is adopted and implemented. For this reason, staff recommends that the City Council prohibit the use of motorized, off-road vehicles (for purposes of recreation) on the City's property in the South Hills. As a large property owner, the City has the obligation and responsibility to ensure that the public health, safety, and convenience are preserved.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

The initial investigation and study of this issue by the Trails Development Committee is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15306. Information collection and resource evaluation activities are eligible for a Class 6 Categorical Exemption. However, the preparation and adoption of a Trails Master Plan would be subject to CEQA. If the master plan project is deferred until after the General Plan is adopted, it may be covered by the analysis on trails and recreational uses that will be included in the General Plan Environmental Impact (EIR), or any additional environmental review could be tiered from the EIR.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There are no financial impacts associated with the study of this issue. However, the preparation of a Trails Master Plan, the related CEQA document and technical studies (i.e., acoustical analysis, air quality, geotechnical and soils analysis, and biological resources survey) could cost around \$50,000, depending on what type and how many technical studies are actually needed.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A Trails Development Committee Agenda Summaries (June 19, 2003, July 24, 2003, and August 28, 2003)
- B Letters of Comment

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